CHAPTER 6

DEMOLITION OF MATERIEL TO PREVENT ENEMY USE

Section Index

6-1 GENERAL

a. If subject to capture or abandonment in the combat zone, the howitzer will be destroyed only when, in the judgment of the unit commander, such action is necessary in accordance with orders or policy of the commander.

b. The information, which follows, is for guidance only. Certain procedures require the use of demolition charges and incendiary grenades, which may not be authorized items for the using organization. The issue of these and related materiel's and the conditions under which the howitzer will be destroyed are command decisions, according to the tactical situation. Destruction of essential parts, followed by burning, will usually be enough to make the materiel useless. Selection of the particular method of destruction requires imagination and resourcefulness, in using the facilities at hand under existing conditions. Time is critical. The most applicable means of destruction are as follows:

(1) Mechanical. Requires axe, pick mattock, sledge, crow bar or similar implement.

(2) Demolition. Requires suitable explosives and ammunition.

(3) Burning. Requires gasoline, oil, incendiary grenades, or other flammables

(4) Gunfire. Includes artillery, machine guns, rifles using rifle grenades, and launchers using anti-tank rockets. Under some circumstances, hand grenades may be used.

c. If the howitzer is to be destroyed, the materiel must be so badly damaged that it cannot be restored to a suitable condition in the combat zone, either by repair, or cannibalization. Adequate destruction requires that all parts essential to the operation of the materiel, including essential spare parts, be destroyed or damaged beyond repair. However, when lack of time and personnel prevents destruction of all parts, priority is given to the destruction of those parts most difficult to replace. Equally important, the same essential parts must be destroyed on all like materiel, so that the enemy cannot construct one complete unit from several damaged ones.

d. If destruction is ordered, these procedures should be followed:

(1) Select a point of destruction that will cause the greatest obstruction to enemy movement and also prevent hazard to friendly troops from fragments or ricocheting projectiles.

(2) Observe appropriate safety precautions.

6-2 DESTRUCTION OF FIRE CONTROL EQUIPMENT (FCE)

All FCE, especially such items as telescopes, gunners quadrants, binoculars and similar items, is costly, difficult to replace, yet relatively light. It should be conserved and evacuated whenever practicable. If evacuation is impracticable, the equipment should be destroyed completely. The preferred means of destruction of FCE is by demolition, burning, or gunfire. If by demolition, miscellaneous fire control components may be placed on or near auxiliary charges. Small charges should be placed at the main fire control attachment points. If the tactical situation mandates mechanical destruction, primary attention should be given to lenses, control knobs, mounting surfaces, and counters. After destruction, personnel should immediately wash with soap and water. Firing tables and other flammable items will be burned.

6-3 DESTRUCTION OF CANNON TUBE AND TOP CARRIAGE ASSEMBLY

a. If time permits, personnel and materiel's are available; the destruction of the complete howitzer should be accomplished by means of demolition materiels, burning or gunfire. If time, personnel or materiel's are limited, priority should be given to the destruction of the cannon tube. Pneumatic tires should be destroyed as described in paragraph 6-4.

b. Method No. 1 Destruction with Demolition Charges.

(1) For simultaneous detonation, prepare and place demolition charges (1lb (0.45kg)) TNT blocks (or equivalent with the necessary detonating cord) as indicated below:

Charge	**Location of Charge**
2-lb (0.91-kg)	Insert charge into cannon tube
2-lb (0.91-kg)	Place next to recoil accumulator
2-lb (0.91-kg)	Place charge on carriage next to left wheel and wheel axle arm
2-lb (0.91-kg)	Place charge on carriage next to right wheel and wheel axle arm

(2) Connect the charge for simultaneous detonation with detonating cord.

(3) Detonate the charges. For complete details on the use of demolition materiel's and methods of priming and detonating demolition charges, refer to TM 750-244-7. Training and careful planning are essential. The danger zone is approximately 273 yds (250 meters).

Elapsed time: About 10 minutes.

c. Method No. 2 Destruction by Burning.

WARNING

DO NOT STRIKE EQUILIBRATOR, RECOIL SYSTEM, OR SCAVENGE SYSTEM AS THEY COULD EXPLODE AND INJURE PERSONNEL.

(1) With combustible materiel's:

(a) Using an axe, pick mattock, sledge, or similar implement, smash the brake lines, hydraulic lines, FCE handwheels, and elevation gearboxes.

6-3 DESTRUCTION OF CANNON TUBE AND TOP CARRIAGE ASSEMBLY (cont)

(b) Destruction of essential parts, followed by burning in an intense fire, will usually make the cannon tube and top carriage useless. Since the cannon tube and top carriage are almost entirely metal, enough quantities of combustibles should be used to ensure a very hot fire.

(c) If explosive ammunition is available, place the unpacked ammunition on and above the cannon tube and top carriage.

(d) Pour gasoline or oil over the combustible materiel.

WARNING

COVER MUST BE TAKEN WITHOUT DELAY, SINCE THE FIRE MAY CAUSE AN EARLY EXPLOSION OF THE EXPLOSIVE AMMUNITION. IF EXPLOSIVE AMMUNITION IS PRESENT, THE DANGER AREA IS 273 YDS (250 METERS).

(e) Ignite by means of an incendiary grenade fired from a safe distance, by a burst from a flame-thrower, by a combustible train of a suitable length, or by other appropriate means. Take cover immediately.

Elapsed time: About 6 minutes.

(2) With incendiary grenades - If large quantities of combustibles are not available, use incendiary grenades as follows:

WARNING

EACH ROLL OF TIME BLASTING FUZE MUST BE TESTED SHORTLY BEFORE USE. THE RATE OF BURNING WILL VARY FOR THE SAME OR DIFFERENT ROLL UNDER DIFFERENT ATMOSPHERIC AND/OR CLIMATIC CONDITIONS, FROM A BURNING TIME OF 30 SECONDS OR LESS PER FOOT TO 45 SECONDS OR MORE PER FOOT.

TIME BLASTING FUZES SHALL BE OF SUFFICIENT LENGTH TO ALLOW PERSONNEL ENOUGH TIME TO SAFELY LEAVE THE HOWITZER AFTER IGNITING THE FUZES.

(a) Insert two incendiary grenades end-to-end in the muzzle brake of the cannon tube. The two grenades will be ignited by means of a third grenade fitted with a length of blasting time fuze. The metal from the grenades will fuze with the tube.

(b) Place the fourth and fifth grenades on the carriage; the first next to the left wheel and wheel axle arm and the second next to the right wheel and wheel arm axle. A sixth grenade fitted with a length of time blasting fuze will ignite the two grenades.

(c) Place a seventh grenade next to the recoil accumulator. An eighth grenade fitted with a length of time blasting fuze will ignite this grenade.

Elapsed time: About 5 minutes.

6-3 DESTRUCTION OF CANNON TUBE AND TOP CARRIAGE ASSEMBLY (cont)

d. Method No 3. Destruction by Gunfire.

WARNING

FIRING ARTILLERY AT RANGES OF 421 YDS (460 METERS) OR LESS SHOULD BE FROM COVER. FIRING RIFLE GRENADES OR ANTI-TANK ROCKETS SHOULD BE FROM COVER

(1) This method cannot be relied upon to destroy the same parts of all cannons and carriages or to produce the same degree of destruction. Fire on the cannons and carriages, using nearby artillery, machine guns, rifles using rifle grenades, or launchers using anti-tank rockets. Although one well placed direct hit may render the cannon tube and top carriage temporarily useless, several hits are usually required for complete destruction.

Elapsed time: about 5 minutes.

6-4 DESTRUCTION OF PNEUMATIC TIRES

a. An attempt must always be made to destroy pneumatic tires, even if time will not permit destruction of the remainder of the bottom carriage. Destroy tires with incendiary grenades in conjunction with the destruction of the howitzer.

b. Method No 1. Destruction by Incendiary Grenades.

WARNING

DO NOT USE WHITE PHOSPHOROUS (WP) GRENADES TO DESTROY THE TIRES. WP GRENADES BURST AND THROW BURNING WHITE PHOSPHOROUS PARTICLES AS FAR AS 27 YDS (30 METERS).

(1) Ignite an incendiary grenade under each tire.

(2) When this method is combined with the destruction of materiel by means of demolition materiels, the detonation of demolition charges should be delayed until the incendiary fires are well started to avoid the possibility of the flames being extinguished by the blast of the explosion.

Elapsed time: About 2 minutes.

c. Method No 2. Destruction by Slashing.

WARNING

BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO SLASH TIRE, DEFLATE TIRE, AS A BLOWOUT MAY OCCUR, CAUSING POSSIBLE INJURY TO PERSONNEL.

(1) Wherever practicable, deflate the tires before slashing.

Elapsed time: about 3 minutes